

De La Hoya-Mosley II: Why It's Oscar This Time

Written by Frank Lotierzo
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Now that De La Hoya's public workout with Campas is behind us, we can think about a real fight: De La Hoya-Mosley II. Before getting into that, lets clear up some things on boxing's "Golden Boy" (I hate the phrase "Golden Boy"). I must say that I'm not a De La Hoya basher, nor am I a De La Hoya apologist. I think De La Hoya is an outstanding fighter, but not in the same league with Leonard and Hearn as a welterweight and junior middleweight. De La Hoya's opponent Shane Mosley is also an outstanding fighter. I loved him as a lightweight, liked him a lot as a welterweight and, as a junior middleweight, I'm not sure. However, in my opinion Mosley is the only fighter to beat De La Hoya in the ring. Sorry Tito fans. That being said, De La Hoya will beat Shane in the rematch. More on that in a minute. Back to Oscar, what I respect about him is the fact that from 147-154, he's avoided nobody. However, I agree with those that have said, other than Vargas, he hasn't beaten any of the top welterweights or junior middleweights convincingly, but he still won.

A Quick capsule of De La Hoya's major fights at 147 and 154

When De La Hoya won the welterweight title from Pernell Whitaker, many had a problem with the decision (along with Lampley's bias commentary). I thought the fight was brutal to watch, since neither fighter could do anything. Though Whitaker kept Oscar from overwhelming him, other than making him miss, Whitaker wasn't too effective offensively. I had the fight 6-5 for Whitaker going into the 12th round. In the last round Whitaker did nothing but run and mock De La Hoya while Oscar was pursuing him and throwing punches. Granted, although De La Hoya's shots weren't landing cleanly, he had to get the round due to his effort and Pernell doing absolutely nothing. Whitaker blew it more then De La Hoya won it. I had the fight a draw!

Another one of De La Hoya's disputed fights was his title defense against Ike Quartey. This was a very spirited fight from start to finish. I had Ike ahead 6-5 in rounds, and up by one point going into the last round. Before the bell rang for the 12th round, I said to those next to me, "De La Hoya needs a two point round here to pull the fight out. Like him or not, in that last round Oscar lived up to the hype and showed the boxing public that he is a true champion by dominating Quartey and almost stopping him to pull the fight out on my card by one point. I think this fight highlighted some of the flaws in the 10-point must scoring system. What made the fight appear to be in Quartey's favor was that the rounds he won 10-9 were more clear-cut than the ones De La Hoya won 10-9. Quartey's rounds were more solid then De La Hoya's when neither scored a knockdown. So, basically, the rounds De La Hoya eked out were equal to Quartey's rounds that he won clearly without putting Oscar down.

In what was the signature fight for both fighters at the time, I felt Oscar and Felix Trinidad brought out the worst in each other. Many fans felt before the fight that if it were close, De La Hoya would be the benefactor in the scoring. There should be no conjecture about this fight whatsoever. De La Hoya clearly out-thought and out-fought Trinidad for seven of the first nine rounds. There's no doubt De La Hoya's ahead 7-2 in rounds after the ninth, or by five points. I thought the 10th was even but for argument sake lets say it's Trinidad's round, which makes it 7-3 in rounds or De La Hoya up by four points with two rounds remaining. Clearly, Trinidad won

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the 11th & 12th rounds. However, that still gives De La Hoya the fight 7-5 in rounds or 115-113 on points, because neither fighter had a two-point round. What amazes me is how everyone kills Oscar for moving and not mixing with Trinidad in those last three rounds. My question is, what did Trinidad do so great other than being the aggressor in those rounds? It's not as if Trinidad beat him up or staggered him. Bottom line is De La Hoya clearly beat Trinidad that night. I'm not saying he's the better fighter for their overall careers, just that night. Here's the rationale for Trinidad losing in the ring, I believe that he may have been weak at the weight; getting down to 147 pounds may have weakened him rendering him incapable of fighting his best.

The only fight in which I feel De La Hoya was clearly beaten, was his fight with Shane Mosley. As stated earlier, Mosley is an outstanding fighter. The De La Hoya-Mosley fight was a very good fight. I had it scored even after six rounds. However Mosley clearly got the better of it in four of the last six rounds. Sugar Shane used his hand speed and effective counter-punching on the aggressively pursuing De La Hoya. I got the feeling that Oscar felt he could walk through Shane because he was moving up to welterweight from lightweight bypassing the junior welterweight division. I also felt that De La Hoya was subconsciously fighting the last rounds of the Trinidad fight. The fact that he took a beating with some fans and the media for running those last rounds against Tito made him feel he had to reestablish his toughness. By De La Hoya trying to gain some fans back, he fought the wrong fight against Mosley, who he must've felt it was safe to fight in the style of a "catch and kill fighter!" Don't look for the same scenario in the rematch September 13th.

Since losing to Mosley, De La Hoya has stopped Arturo Gatti in five and decisioned Javier Castillejo in his first junior middleweight fight capturing the WBC title. In his first title defense he TKO'd rival Fernando Vargas in the 11th round, and had a seven round public workout with Yory Boy Campas. De La Hoya has received much praise off his showing against Vargas. I believe this is because he fought a very smart fight, using the entire ring and not trading with Vargas unless he could counter him off a big miss while Vargas came at him. De La Hoya also showed he could take it as well as he could give it. However, I do think the brutal fight Vargas had with Trinidad may have taken a little out of him, and possibly softened him up for De La Hoya. Like him or not, Oscar has shown that he does have a champion's heart and determination. He has also shown that he's worked on his right hand--something that he needed to make him a more complete fighter.

On September 13th of this year, De La Hoya will face "Sugar" Shane Mosley, the only fighter who has gotten the better of him in the ring. The biggest Oscar fans cannot dispute that. Since beating De La Hoya, Mosley made three successful defenses of the WBC welterweight title before losing it to his old nemesis Vernon Forrest. Forrest gave Mosley a thorough and complete beating in their first fight. In the rematch Shane was much more competitive but couldn't quite get the better of Vernon. I don't think Forrest is a better fighter than Mosley but, I feel he has Mosley's number from a styles standpoint, and after defeating him a second time he probably owns him mentally as well. However, I feel that against the same fighters, Mosley would do better than Forrest. Since losing to Forrest the second time, Mosley has moved up to the junior middleweight division. In Mosley's only fight at 154, he fought Raul Marquez. The fight was declared a no-contest after the 3rd round when Marquez was cut from an accidental head

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butt by Mosley. Three rounds is not enough to evaluate a fighter who is fighting in a higher weight division for the first time. That being said, I'm going to do it anyhow. I just don't think Mosley can carry 154 pounds as well as De La Hoya. I believe Shane left a lot of his punch in the welterweight division. De La Hoya has an advantage the higher up in weight they fight.

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De La Hoya will decision Mosley this time. He is over the Trinidad stench that was on his mind in their first fight. Since they met on June 17, 2000, De La Hoya is better and I think Shane is less then he was at the time of the first fight. I can't help but think that the two Forrest defeats have taken something from Mosley. This time, De La Hoya will fight his fight and not try to go through Mosley. Oscar will box, using the entire ring while circling to the left while jabbing. This will draw Mosley to Oscar, which will enhance De La Hoya's chances to counter and score cleanly. Also, De La Hoya brings a more rounded attack this time with a more polished right hand. I believe De La Hoya fights his fight this time, and he'll nullify Mosley's aggression by tying him up when he is forced to the ropes or into a corner. Mosley will be forced to be the Joe Frazier in this fight, and that's not Mosley at his best. However, styles will dictate and De La Hoya wins. I'm not taking anything away from Mosley. I felt at lightweight he was the best since Whitaker. Mosley is an outstanding fighter. Against most fighters, he can beat you moving away or going to his opponent. I just think it's Oscar's time.

Writers Note

Before you guys start jumping all over me for being a De La Hoya groupie and a Tyson basher, I must concur that I don't think De La Hoya's the best thing I've ever seen. No way at his best does he beat a prime Ray Leonard, Roberto Duran or Thomas Hearns. I'm not even sure he would've beat Donald Curry pre-Lloyd Honeyghan. However, for this era, he's the best fighting at either welterweight or junior middleweight. He's fought everybody who is somebody. Even if you think he got the benefit of some close calls, nobody has ever gone through him. Other than Hopkins, I don't think any fighter 160 or below goes through him. As long as Oscar stays away from Hopkins he shouldn't have any problems. I just don't see that there's any way he wins if they fight in the near future.